

**Office of Equity and Civil Rights
Community Relations Commission
Virtual Meeting
Public Session Minutes
January 27, 2021**

Participating in the virtual conference were Commissioners Todd Yeary (Chair), Adote Akwei, Nadine Finigan-Carr, Phillip Farfel, and Stephen Ruckman. Also present were staff: Cedric McCray (Interim Director), Lisa Kelly (Supervisor), Danielle Burton, Lauren Jackson, Carleen Dadeboe.

I. Welcome/Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 11:10 am.

II. Approval of the Minutes

A. November 18, 2020

a. Minutes were approved with the following corrections.

- i. Trainings – There was cross-training of the staff on Wage practices.
- ii. Question and Response to the question of voter safety during the election:
 1. Commissioner Akwei raised a question of voter safety during the election and asked that this be added to the minutes.
 2. Commissioner Akwei’s question was addressed by staff in reassuring that every step was taken to guarantee voter safety to encourage voters to go to the poll without any fear or concern.
 3. Amendment: The response was added to the 11/18/20 Public Session minutes and the 1/27/21 Public Session minutes.

III. Director's Report

A. Interim Director McCray gave highlights from the report (*Director’s report presented*)

- a. No CRC Board meeting in December
- b. December 10 - CRC staff attended both IOAHRA’s and COVE’s Webex events for International Human Rights Day.
- c. December 15 - OECR staff attended “Can We Talk: Civil Rights in the 2021 Legislative Session” via Webex
- d. December 4 - CRC staff hosted three live webinars on via Facebook for housing professionals, persons with disabilities, and sexual harassment in housing.
- e. December 30 - CRC staff hosted a live Spanish webinar on housing equity for immigrants and refugees on via Facebook.

- f. April 2021 - CRC staff continues to plan for OECR's Fair Housing Month. CRC will be hosting an art installation based on fair housing to be available to the public throughout the month of April

B. Data

- a. As of January 22, 2021 CRC has:
 - i. 189 open investigations
 - 1. 175 employment complaints
 - 2. 12 housing complaints
 - 3. 2 public accommodation complaints
 - ii. Board Metrics December 2020
 - 1. complaint authorized for investigation - 1
 - 2. complaints closed p/investigator - 1.25
 - 3. % of complaints closed within 250 days after authorization - 60%
 - 4. % of complaints closed through negotiated resolution - 40%

C. Administrative Issues

- a. Mayor Scott appointed Dana P. Moore as Baltimore's first Chief Equity Officer and OECR Director. Staff met with Ms. Moore.
- b. Staff prepared to interview potential CRC Commissioners in January 2021.
- c. Ms. Lauren Jackson gave highlights as a result of the Fair Housing webinars – 1) 1 inquiry, 2) 1 inquiry in disabilities, 3) 1 request for training from the Department of Homeless Services, 4) Ms. Jackson shared data with the Commissioners.
- d. Ms. Jackson will share information regarding events that are planned with the HUD grant.
- e. Commissioner Farfel asked about advocating for the OECR budget. Interim Director McCray did not anticipate any current budget changes. The office has been approved to hire two additional staff, 1) Wage position and 2) admin position.
- f. **Action:** Chair Yeary will follow-up with a call and letter to Mayor and City Council President regarding the urgency of appointments.
- g. Commissioner Finigan-Carr requested a detailed statistical sheet showing the data for the individual months of July through December 2020 as well as corrections for the month of December.
 - i. **Action:** Interim Director McCray will provide a corrected statistical sheet for the record.
 - 1. He will review the information in the statistical data
 - 2. Update the amounts in restitution
 - 3. Add a corrected report for the February meeting

IV. Commissioners' Report

A. Commissioner Akwei made reference to the Spanish Webinar on housing and asked Acting Director McCray if a question had been raised about the risk of eviction and what is the outcome of that Webinar. He asked if there is anything that can be done for the French speaking community and the small churches. In addition, he requested a reduction in the paperwork for reapplication of older members. **Action:** Commissioners will discuss later offline.

Action: Acting Director McCray and Ms. Jackson will touch base with Commissioners' Akwei and Finigan-Carr to discuss housing participation and the French speaking community.

B. Commissioner Finigan-Carr spoke on the Statewide labor trafficking event happening later that day and thanked those in advance for their participation.

C. Commissioner Farfel commented on the issues surrounding Civil Rights and education for children and would like the Commission to remain active in supporting equality in education and continue framing education as a part of Article IV.

D. Acting Director McCray spoke about a new system for tracking legislative Bills in the Mayor's Office. **Action:** Staff will notify the Commission should the office choose to take a position regarding a Bill.

V. Open Forum

A. Next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2021. **Note:** Acting Director McCray spoke about a scheduling conflict due to staff training on March 17, 2021.

There was no further business to discuss.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:52 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Office of Equity and Civil Rights